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SKETCH OF THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF LEON COUNTY, ITS ORGANIZATION, AND SOME OF THE EARLY SETTLERS.<sup>1</sup>

W. D. WOOD.

Leon county is situated between the Trinity and Navasota rivers, and north of the old San Antonio road. It is bounded on the south by the San Antonio road and Madison county; on the west by the Navasota river and Brazos, Robertson, and Limestone counties; on the north by Limestone, Freestone, and Anderson counties; on the east by the Trinity river and Anderson and Houston counties. Its area is about 1049 square miles.

So far as is now known the first permanent settlers of the county were the Kickapoo and Keechi tribes of Indians. When the Americans first became acquainted with the territory of Leon, the Kickapoos had a permanent village or encampment on the west bank of the Trinity, at a place now known as the Kickapoo shoals. The village was located on land now included in an eleven league grant, made to Ramon de la Garza May 7, 1831. When the country was first known to the writer, which was in 1851, every vestige of the Indian town had disappeared, and there was nothing to indicate that the spot had ever been the seat of a red man's village—that his council house and wigwam had been there, and that there, on his return from a successful foray, he exhibited his scalps and celebrated with barbaric orgies his prowess as a warrior and his triumph over his enemies. Corn and cotton fields now occupy the site of the village, and the peaceful evidences of thrift and civilization are substituted for the war dance. Could the shade of a departed Kickapoo be permitted to visit the scenes of the flesh, he would find naught to remind him of his former home but the river and the water brawling over the rocky shoals. All else is blotted out.

The Keechi tribe had a village on what is now the Ramirez league of land, about two and a half miles north of the present town of Centreville. This village had an ideal location, and cer-

<sup>1</sup>The sources of information from which this sketch has been compiled are a History of Navarro, Leon and other Counties kindly lent the writer by William Croft, Esq., of Corsicana, and conversations had with many of the pioneers of Leon county in the early fifties.

tainly demonstrated that, notwithstanding the Keechis were most inveterate thieves and beggars, they had an eye to beauty of locality, and an appreciation of a soil that would produce most bountifully the favorite Indian crop of corn and beans. The village was situated near the hills on the upper edge of a bottom prairie that extended down to near the lower or Little Keechi creek. Fine springs furnished an ample supply of the purest water. The soil of the prairie was exceedingly fertile, on which grew the richest grapes, varigated with an almost endless variety of the loveliest wild flowers. The land on which the village was situated is now a farm, and the plow share occasionally turns up an old gun barrel or some other evidence of Indian occupation. Even as late as 1851, when the writer first saw the place, there was to be seen some evidences of the rude Indian cultivation of a portion of the prairie contiguous to the village.

When the Americans first crossed the Trinity in 1831 and commenced to survey and locate land in the territory of what is now Leon, the Indians viewed with the greatest curiosity the surveyor and his instruments. They looked upon him and his assistants as intruders and thieves, engaged in the theft of the land which had been theirs and their hunting ground from time immemorial; and, the surveyor's compass being the instrument by means of which the theft was accomplished, they called it "the land stealer."

Fort Parker was located in what is now Limestone county, between the site of the old town of Springfield and the present town of Groesbeck. After the massacre at this fort in 1833, the few settlers that were between the Brazos and Trinity and north of the San Antonio road, all fled for safety east of the Trinity river, and there is no evidence that there was any permanent settler located in what is now Leon prior to 1839 or 1840.

In 1836, the San Antonio road, which was the southern boundary of the county when first organized, from the crossing on the Navasota river to Robbin's Ferry on the Trinity, was thronged and choked with men, women and children fleeing from the settlements on the Brazos and Colorado, before the advance of the army of Santa Anna. These fugitives were terror stricken, some on foot, some on horseback, and others with any sort of conveyance they could at the moment press into service. They seemed to be moved by only one impulse, and that was to reach the Sabine and the terri-

tory of the United States, where they would be safe from Mexican pursuit. But during their headlong flight, and before many of them had crossed the Trinity, the news of the battle of San Jacinto, the defeat of the Mexican army, and the capture of Santa Anna, reached them. This stopped their flight, and they at once faced about and returned to their respective homes. This escapade was called by the old Texans, "the Runaway Scrape."<sup>1</sup> At this time, early in 1836, says one who met the crowd of refugees on the old road, between the Navasota and Trinity, there was not a single settler within the present limits of Leon county.

The Kickapoo and Keechi Indians had the reputation of being great thieves, especially the Keechis. Shortly after the Americans crossed the Trinity and commenced the surveying and locating of land, the Kickapoos abandoned the territory of Leon, going west towards the Rio Grande, and in that section, in connection with the Lipan Indians, gave the early western settlers much trouble. The location of land in the eastern and central portions of Leon caused the Keechi Indians to remove their village from Keechi creek to the Navasota river, in the western portion of the county. These Indians made great professions of friendship for the whites, but were constantly engaged in thieving expeditions, and when charged with their thefts would assert their innocence and lay the blame on other Indians. These depredations became insupportable, and in 1835 an expedition was organized, under a Colonel Coleman, who drove them out of the territory of Leon and chased them to the head waters of the Trinity, and the Keechis were no more heard of in the territory they had so long inhabited. It seems that their existence as a separate tribe soon afterwards ceased, and their identity was lost by absorption with other tribes.

In 1839, there was organized a company of rangers or minute men to protect such settlements as might be made north of the San Antonio road, and between the Navasota and Brazos rivers. Captain Chandler had charge of this organization, and its headquarters was at Old Franklin in what has since become Robertson county. About the time of this organization at Old Franklin, John Karnes, the Middletons, the Burnses, the Taylors, Irwin and three of his sons, the Stateys, and several others organized a minute company under Captain Greer, with headquarters an Boggy creek, the object

<sup>1</sup>See *The Reminiscences of Mrs. Dilue Harris*, in this number.

of which was to protect settlers in the territory of Leon between the Navasota and Trinity. This company of minute men built a blockhouse on the north bank of Boggy creek, about two and a half miles north of the present town of Leona, and about five miles south of Centreville. The blockhouse was built two stories high, the upper story extending over and beyond the walls of the lower story, so that those in the fort could shoot any person coming near the walls of the lower story. This blockhouse was called Fort Boggy, and not many years since its remains were still to be seen. The organization of the company of minute men and the building of this fort, and the formation of a like company at Old Franklin, inspired confidence, and soon settlers with their families commenced coming into the territory of Leon. The first settlements were made around the Fort, about where Leona now stands, on the Leon prairie and on the San Antonio road, in what is now known as Rogers' prairie.

During the years 1840-41 quite a number of men with their families settled round Boggy Fort, among whom were the Greers, the Middletons, the Burnses, the Taylors, the Patricks, the Stateys, and some others. About the same time the Rogersons, the Ewings, and the Rileys settled on the line of the San Antonio road west of the Leon prairie. Somewhat later in the forties came Major John Durst, Henry J. Jewett, James Fowler, William Evans, Onesimus Evans, Riley and William Wallace, the Marshalls, the Kings, E. Whitton, Sam Davis, Thomas H. Garner, McKay Ball, Dr. A. D. Boggs, Moses Campbell, William Pruitt, Thomas Thorn, P. M. Sherman, D. C. Carrington, J. J. McBride, John J. Goodman, William Little and many others. Some of these settled on Boggy near the fort, some round Leona, some on lower Keechi creek, and some round the Leon prairie and along the San Antonio road. Moses Campbell opened the first store in the county at Fort Boggy, and Riley Wallace built the first grist mill on Boggy creek near the fort and was the first postmaster in the county. Thomas H. Garner built the first saw mill in the county on a spring branch, a tributary of Beaver Dam creek. Elisha Whitton, at a very early day, built a grist mill on lower Keechi, not far above where it empties into the Trinity, and near the town of Cairo, a steamboat landing on Trinity, established by the Rogersons and Captain Chandler. Colonel Alexander Patrick landed with his family at Cairo in 1841. The town of Navarro in the northern part of the county was located

in the early forties as a steamboat landing by Captain J. J. McBride, John J. Goodman, and William Little. These two towns, at quite an early day, did a large business in the way of distributing supplies brought by the steamboats to the country back from the river, and as shipping points for such products as the country had to sell. The sites of both of these towns are now cotton and corn fields, the towns having been destroyed by the advent of the railroads.

Subsequent to the expulsion of the Keechis and Kickapoos from the territory of Leon, there was no more permanent occupation by any Indian tribe, but after the white settlers commenced coming in the Indians made occasional incursions into the settlements for the purpose of stealing stock. Robert and Stephen Rogers had settled in Rogers' prairie on the San Antonio road, and in 1841 the son of Stephen was killed by the Indians. Young Rogers was bathing in a pool of water near his fathers residence when he was suddenly set upon by a gang of Indians. He attempted to escape to the house, but was cut off and killed. About the same time Captain Greer, who had charge at Fort Boggy, accompanied by two or three companions went on a prospecting tour to the upper Keechi creek in the northern part of the county. While they were on a prairie bordering the creek, a band of ten or twelve Indians, mounted on horses, rushed out from a line of timber along the margin of the creek, yelling and brandishing their weapons, and charged Greer and his companions, who at once put spurs to their horses, hoping to reach the hills and timber where they would have some chance for a successful defence. Captain Greer, however, being poorly mounted, fell behind, and was overtaken in the prairie and shot to death by arrows. His companions succeeded in making their escape. They made their way back to Fort Boggy and securing assistance at the fort returned the next day for the body of Captain Greer, which they found near the spot where he was overtaken by the Indians. Greer and young Rogers were the only white men known to be killed by Indians in the territory of Leon county.

The San Antonio road, which was the southern boundary of the county, was the artery of travel between San Antonio in the west, Nacogdoches in the east, and all intermediate settlements. In the early days it was simply a trail for pack mules. They traveled one behind another, and from the abrasion of their feet, all in the same

track, the road was a mere trench. The old Spaniards who located this road from San Antonio to Nacogdoches, if not engineers by education, were such by dint of native genius. They selected the best crossings on the streams and the best ground, avoided the hills and sandy stretches, and at the same time economized distance. The road from the Navasota to the Trinity passes over firm ground, prairies and timber alternating, missing heavy sand on either side, with convenient water holes along the entire distance.

Large caravans of pack mules loaded with silver passed over this road, between San Antonio and Nacogdoches, some two or three times a year. There is a tradition that one of these caravans, heavily loaded with treasure, camped one night between the Navasota and the Trinity. During the night they were attacked by Indians, and in order to save the treasure they threw the bags of silver into an adjacent lake. After a stout defence the *cargadores* were over-powered and all of them murdered by the Indians except three, who succeeded in making their escape and getting back to San Antonio. Years afterwards, it is said one of the three that escaped the massacre returned to see if he could not locate the spot and find the lost treasure; but such were the changes that time had wrought in the features of the country and the road, that his efforts were in vain, and he abandoned the search in disgust. Before he left the neighborhood, however, he told his story to some of the settlers, who had faith enough in its truth to search and drag all of the water holes on either side of the road from the Navasota to the Trinity, but they found none of the treasure; or, if they did, they took care never to let it be known. Occasional coins have been picked up in this region along the line of the road, mute evidence of the treasure that was carried by *cargadores* over this old "King's Highway."

By 18—the accession of population in the territory now included in Leon county had been such that McKay Ball, then a resident of Fort Boggy and member of the State legislature from the territory comprising at that time Robertson county, introduced a bill into the legislature for the organization of Leon county out of a part of the territory then included in Robertson. The bill passed, and the county was organized. Mr. Ball suggested the name Leon for the county, and Leona for the county seat. The location of this place was about one mile north of Leon prairie and some three miles from the San Antonio road. The name of the prairie suggested

that of the county, and the prairie received its name from the fact that in very early times a large Mexican lion was killed there.

The first court held in the county of Leon was opened at Leona, on the 12th day of October, 1846. That friend of education and able jurist, R. E. B. Baylor, was the presiding judge. Thomas Johnson was district attorney, William Keigwin district clerk, and W. B. Middleton sheriff. The other county officers were I. P. Reinhardt, county clerk; and David M. Brown, chief justice. Onesimus Evans was foreman of the grand jury. Only two indictments were returned at this term of the court.

Population from the San Antonio road, round Leona and Fort Boggy, gradually diffused itself over the territory of the county. By 1849 complaints began to be heard from the settlers that Leona, the county seat, was on one edge of the county and for that reason inconvenient of access to a large part of the population, and that the county seat for the convenience of the people should be near the territorial center. The result was an election to decide the matter. The spot where Centreville now stands—within a radius of five miles of the territorial center—and Leona were the contesting localities. After a warm and spirited canvass, Centreville was selected, and the county seat removed there in 1850, where it has since remained.

Leon county has the honor of having located within its boundaries the headright league and labor of that unique personality, R. M. Williamson, better known as "Three-legged Willie." It is on the west bank of the Trinity, opposite the old Alabama crossing of that stream.

The early annals of Leon county bear no record of the occurrence, on its soil, of any great historic event of such supreme importance as to become a notable factor in the shaping of the destiny of Texas. While there is in its borders no spot of ground that has been made classic or hallowed by its historical associations, yet from the date of its earliest settlement by Americans in 1839 or 1840, its people have done their whole duty in the settlement and development of Texas, both as soldiers and as civilians. Leon county feels a just pride in those of her early settlers who assisted in laying the foundations of the State.

Henry J. Jewett, one of the early settlers of Leon, attended as a member of the bar the first court held in the county. He was a

man of strong intellectuality, a finished scholar, and learned lawyer. When the thirteenth judicial district was organized in 1852 or 1853, leaving Judge Baylor out of the new thirteenth, Jewett was elected judge and served the people of the district as such most acceptably up to a short time before the breaking out of the Civil War, when he was defeated by John Gregg, who was then a rising young lawyer of Freestone county. On the breaking out of the war Judge Gregg resigned his judgeship and went into the army, where he soon rose to the rank of brigadier general and was killed in Virginia at the head of his brigade. Judge Jewett was a candidate to fill the vacant judgeship and was elected. He served a short time, when his mind became so deranged as to wholly disqualify him for discharging the duties of the office, and he was compelled to resign. He never recovered, but wandered away from his home in Leon, during the Civil War, and at its close he was in Matamoras, Mexico. From there, by some means, he got to the city of New York, where he was placed in the lunatic asylum on Blackwell's Island. By some means he effected his escape from the asylum and drowned himself in the North river. Such was the melancholy end of one of the many bright men that adorned the early period of Texas history and did so much towards the formation of its laws and its system of jurisprudence.

Judge Jewett had been private secretary of President Lamar during his administration. He left a widow and children, who, when the writer last heard from them, resided in Robertson county, Texas.

William B. Middleton was one of the earliest settlers of Leon county. He was a native of Illinois and came to Texas when a boy. He helped to build Fort Boggy in 1839 or 1840, and was a member of the minute company organized at the fort to guard against the incursions of the Indians and render the settlement of the territory of Leon county by the Americans possible. Middleton was a volunteer in the unfortunate Meir expedition and was captured by the Mexicans. Like his fellow prisoners, he had to stake his life on the drawing of a bean, but fortune favored him. He was carried to the City of Mexico and there placed upon the public works, starved, beaten, and subjected to every conceivable indignity. Thanks, however, to a robust constitution, he survived the hardships of his imprisonment, and with his fellow prisoners was finally liberated

through the intercession of the authorities of the United States. He returned to his home in Leon county, where the people elected him to the office of sheriff at the first election after the organization of the county. He represented the county several times in the Legislature, and was its representative when the States seceded from the Union. During the war he was a brigadier general of militia. After the war he was again elected sheriff of the county, and was holding that office at the time of his death. No man did more towards the settlement and building up of Leon county than he, and no man ever lived in the county who had a greater popularity. He was social, kind, genial and charitable. At his hospitable home the latch string always hung on the outside of the door. Every one that knew him loved him. He died of pneumonia, as the writer remembers, in 1878, leaving no descendants.

One of the noted men and early pioneers of Leon county was Maj. John Durst. He did much to bring into notice and cause the settlement of the territory of Leon. He was a native of Arkansas county, Missouri. Left an orphan on his own resources at an early age, he wandered to New Orleans, and was there taken under the protection of Major Davenport, who was one of a company that had established at Nacogdoches a mercantile house and did an extensive trade with the Mexicans and Indians. Major Davenport discovered in the boy Durst the material out of which men are made. He took him in charge, educated him in a business way, taught him the Spanish language, and finally sent him to Nacogdoches. Young Durst was soon placed in charge of the entire business of the company at that place, which he conducted most successfully, and to the entire satisfaction of the company. He was the first American resident in Nacogdoches, having located there in 1823. Prior to this, when quite a boy, Durst had been sent by the company to the city of Monclova with business dispatches, which long and dangerous journey he satisfactorily performed. When Texas and Coahuila had been formed into a State, Major Durst was elected one of the delegates to the State legislature which held its sessions at the city of Monclova. From Nacogdoches to the capital of the State was 960 miles, through a wilderness, and he made the journey on horseback.

Major Durst located in Leon county in the early forties, buying a tract of land of 2000 acres, situated near the present site of the

town of Leona, and lying between Boggy creek and Leon Prairie. He purchased this land from Allen Dimery, a free negro. Before he removed to Leon, he resided in Nacogdoches county, on the Angelina river in a large house protected by blockhouses. He was the owner of a number of slaves, and he opened a farm on the Dimery tract of land and built a large rock house. The Durst homestead was famous far and wide for its hospitality, and for being general headquarters for the newcomer and the traveler. In 1821 Major Durst married Miss Harriet M. Jameson, daughter of John Jameson, an officer in the United States army. Mrs. Durst was a native of Virginia, born near Harper's Ferry. She was an excellent woman, possessing in an eminent degree all the qualities that adorn and ennoble womanhood. Major and Mrs. Durst both died in Leon county at the old Dimery homestead. Major Durst was an important figure in the early affairs of Texas, and in the settlement and development of Leon county.

On the 14th day of November, 1851, I arrived in Centreville, the county seat of Leon. The town was then one year old, the county seat having been removed from Loud the year before. At the time of my arrival there were in the county, perhaps, some 200 or 250 voters. The country was new, and game was abundant. The uplands were covered with sage and other grasses from two to four feet high. The glades and bottom lands were set with a luxuriant growth of gramma grass so high that when a deer entered it his course could be followed by the opening of the grass, and occasionally his head and ears could be seen as he leaped along. The creek and river bottoms were filled with a dense growth of cane, from ten to fifteen feet high. The range was fine for cattle, horses and hogs, winter and summer. Hogs fed on the acorns of the postoak, overcup oak, red oak, water oak and black-jack and the various native grapes, and needed no attention, except now and then feeding them a little corn to keep them gentle. Cattle and horses kept fat winter and summer on the range. In the fall, the first norther would send the cattle to the bottoms among the cane brakes, where, feeding on the switch cane, they would come out in the spring fat and sleek. Pork in the fall was worth a cent and a half per pound, and beef was to be had at the buyer's own price.

A feeling of social and neighborly kindness pervaded the entire

community. The advent of a newcomer was the signal of universal rejoicing in the neighborhood. All of the neighbors vied with each other in their acts of kindness and hospitality towards him. If he needed beef, he was informed by each old settler as to his mark and brand, and told to go amongst his cattle and make his own selection free of charge. The old settler's corn crib was open to the wants of the newly arrived. Everybody seemed to enjoy life. There were no social distinctions, other than those which were based on integrity and merit. All honest, industrious people met on a common plane. Merit and worth was received and welcomed everywhere. Locks and keys were not needed. All kept open house. The visitor, whether stranger or neighbor, on his arrival was welcomed with hearty and sincere hospitality. The coffee pot was always on the fire, and the guest soon after his arrival was invited to partake of its contents. If he was a stranger, he was bidden to make himself at home and stay a week, and when business or inclination urged his departure he was earnestly requested to call again.

There was among the people no party or political discords. The spirit that ruled the settlers was the desire to settle and upbuild the country. There were in the early fifties no primaries nor conventions for the nomination of candidates for office. Men became candidates of their own volition, or at the solicitation of personal friends, ran on their own merits and not on the demerits of others, and were elected because of their fitness for the office they aspired to.

Such was the sentiment among the early settlers of Texas. They were men who bravely confronted all of the dangers, hardships and discomforts of a newly settled country, conquered the wilderness and laid the foundation deep and strong for the future prosperity, glory and greatness of the State. These early pioneers of Texas not only had to suffer the discomforts of a new and sparsely settled country, but in addition took their lives in their hands in combat with the thieving and bloodthirsty savage. The names and deeds of these pioneers should be treasured in grateful remembrance by us, who now enjoy the fruits of what they so nobly planted in discomfort, toil and danger.

In the early fifties the means of travel and transportation in Texas were of the most primitive and limited character. Everybody, men and women as well, rode horseback. Carriages and buggies

were almost unknown. The supply of goods and groceries for Leon county was obtained for the most part from Houston and Galveston. Steamboats navigated the Trinity river during the winter and spring, brought up supplies and carried off the produce of the country. During the low water season, wagons drawn by from four to six yoke of oxen hauled the cotton to Houston and brought back the necessary supplies. These land ships would often be six weeks in making the round trip from Centreville to Houston and back. Time was no special object. People then lived slow, compared with those of the present fast age. They were in no hurry to make money and get rich, and did not live by steam and electricity. Kerosene was unknown, and the saucer lamp and the tallow dip were the illuminants in those days. Wherever night overtook the teamster he stopped, unyoked his oxen, and hobbled them and turned them out into nature's pasture to feed on the nutritious grass that grew everywhere. He built his camp fire, cooked and ate his frugal supper, and slept on his blanket under his wagon. In the morning he awoke early, recruited his fire, cooked and ate his breakfast, gathered and yoked up his oxen, and pursued his journey and as he moved on, his cheerful song kept time to the rifle-like report of his long whip. In those days, the teamster was a lord. Kings might well envy him in his high state of content and satisfaction.

Much of the cultivation was done with oxen. The farmer would plow one yoke from morning to noon, then turn these out upon the grass and yoke up another pair for the afternoon's plowing.

In those days, every traveler carried his water-goard, his stake rope, coffee pot, provision wallet and blanket, and should night overtake him with no house in sight, he dismounted, staked his horse, built his fire, cooked and ate his meal, spread his blanket under the stars, and slept the sleep of the contented.

Such were the manners, customs, and surroundings of the people when the writer came to Texas, in 1851. While they did not enjoy the advantages and privileges of these modern days, yet they enjoyed more real pleasures, were better contented and were in close contact with life on natural lines than we in these rushing, struggling, discontented times. The lives of the people then moved along the ways of Arcadian simplicity. There was no complaint of trusts, no strikes, no contention between employer and employe,

no demand for legislation favoring one class at the expense of another, no war on capital, no ambitious struggle for social distinction, riches, power or place. Content and good feeling among the people was universal.

Nor were the people in the early fifties unmindful or neglectful of education, morality, or religion. In the village of Centreville, when the writer arrived there, they had a well ordered and well attended school, taught first by an educated gentleman from Scotland, and afterwards by a college graduate from New England. The church of the village was one of the first houses erected. While the Baptist denomination preponderated in the neighborhood, at the time, the church was open to all denominations. Once a month a good and truly pious old Baptist minister, by the name of Coker, who lived in the upper end of the county, some twenty-five miles from Centreville, mounted his horse and came down to minister to the spiritual wants of the village and vicinity, without fee or charge. He was a minister of the olden time whose only ambition was to faithfully serve his Lord and Master and save sinners. I can now hear, ringing in memory's chambers, his fervent petitions, in which he invoked *all of the blessings* upon the little town of Centreville, and the "invincinity thereof." In the honest simplicity of his soul, he would often thank the Lord that "he was sent all the way from Alabama to preach to the heathen here in Texas." Such was the good old man Coker, long since gathered to his father's and gone up to receive the crown of an honest, faithful, well-spent life.

In this same little church in those early days, another good and pious Baptist brother, used occasionally to hold forth. He, too, was one of those old-fashioned sort, by the name of Jones (but that was not his name), that delivered his sermons in a chant or sing-song tone. In fact, the first sentence of this brother was pitched on the sing-song key, which he kept up to the end of the sermon. He, too, was an honest, conscientious man, who tried with all of his might to serve the Lord and his fellows. His was an impetuous nature, and he was liable to be carried off his feet by the impulse of the moment. He fully realized that human nature was weak and beset by many temptations. He candidly admitted that of these temptations to him the most alluring and those against which he had fiercest battles all his life, to prevent their diverting

his feet from the straight and narrow path, were women, wine and horses. While he worshipped the very ground on which a lady walked, loved a race horse, and had a natural inclination for the wine that was red, he fought the good fight and came out the victor. He, too, has long since crossed the river and gone up to receive the reward of a Christian life spent in the service of his Master and his fellow man.

There was another preacher, the Methodist circuit rider, Parson Wright, who preached in the village church during his monthly round. The writer heard him preach first in December, 1851, in a little log school house, with puncheon floor and split log benches, located in the woods, about five miles from Centreville. His congregation consisted of a dozen or more, and the surroundings were of the most primitive character, but these things had no effect on the man. The expression of his face, his tone, and his manner impressed his hearers with the absolute conviction that soul and body he was a soldier of King Emanuel, whose hope and aim was to uphold the banner of righteousness.

The work of this good man, in that early day, was not one of ease or profit. His circuit comprised some half dozen counties. His appointments were so scattered and so far apart, that to preach at each once a month, necessitated constant travel. He traveled horseback, with Bible, hymn book, blanket and saddle-bags, and change of linen, when he was so fortunate as to have a change. He was exposed to all the vicissitudes of the seasons, and he had often to swim swollen streams, at the risk of his life, in order to meet his congregations. He cheerfully submitted to all this toil and discomfort, never uttering a word of complaint. He was a God-fearing, pious and exemplary Christian man. He, too, has been dead for many years. He never had an enemy, and his death was sincerely mourned by all who knew him.

The men here mentioned are but examples of the many and faithful ministers that labored in early Texas. While many of them were neither college-bred nor graduates of any theological seminary, they were honest, pious and God-fearing men, who by their sincerity and zeal set an example before their fellow man worthy of all acceptance, which exercised an irresistible influence for good.

Such were the preachers in Texas in the early fifties, who in the

face of danger and appalling hardships laid the foundation on which has been built the virtue, morality and religious sentiment that characterizes the great mass of the people of Texas at this day. In consideration of the beneficent and civilizing results of their efforts it is but just that they should be remembered. Their work is an essential part of the history of Texas.